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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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SUBJECT Armed Guards in Industrial Plants

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1. The organization of armed combat groups in all important factories was ordered on 24 Feb 54 by Ernst Wollweber Secretary of State for National Security, at the meeting of SED (Socialist Unity Party) district delegates to elect delegates to the fourth annual party conference.
2. Such combat groups, small in numbers in some places, already have been organized in 60 percent of the important factories in the People's Republic (DDR). The distribution of arms is on the basis of the military importance of the plant and is controlled by inspectors of the military Volkspolizei.
3. Back of these measures lies the remark of Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov at the Berlin Four Power Conference, that "a new 17 Jun will never happen in the Soviet Zone," and a report by Wollweber to Karlshorst on comprehensive precautionary measures of the Security Service (SSD) for factory security.
4. The arming of these combat groups is to provide protection for the factories and prevent destruction of machinery or installations in strikes or rebellions. The groups are drilled to control the important points in the plants and the factory grounds.
5. The basic organization of these security troops is in groups of three men. Instructions for an alarm are: close the factory doors and man them with at least a group of three men; close all communicating doors between departments to prevent employees from going from one department to another. These instructions indicate that the task of the combat groups is not merely the protection of the factory, but also to stop the workers from leaving the factory until police or troops arrive.

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6. Only reliable SED members are chosen for the combat groups, and are accepted only after checking through the central party apparatus. The selection is made by the responsible cadre leaders of the factory party group on the basis of a special questionnaire and satisfactory endorsement.
7. The cadre leader is also the recruiting agent for the combat group. The difficulties in obtaining enrollments arise from the refusal of the SED members to play at soldiering, for which they mostly allege physical disqualifications. This resistance on the part of the older SED members results in the combat groups being composed preponderantly of young members whose party connections are slight. This causes great anxiety to the central leadership, because these young group members have to be specially schooled politically and trained militarily. The young people however are only interested in training when it takes place on working time.
8. The armed factory guards will be a subject of consideration (official or unofficial) at the fourth SED party conference.
9. Present Situation in Individual Factories.
 - a. Leuna-Werke, Merseburg. Plant employs about 26,000 men. It is protected by an armed force of about 80 men per shift. The total strength of the combat group is 250 men, who work in three shifts in sub-groups of three men each. One man in each squad is armed with a Soviet machine pistol, the other two carry carbines. The combat group is to be increased to 300 men, so that about 170 men can be employed per shift. There are instructions that, in an emergency, recourse can be had to the stock of weapons of the Volkspolizei guards stationed to protect the factory.
 - b. At Brandenburg-Havel armed groups so far exist only in the Stahlwerk Brandenburg and the Ernst Thälmann shipyard. The steelworks group has 30 men per shift; the shipyard, only 40 men altogether. The other factories at Brandenburg Havel have only groups of nine or 10 men armed with army pistols.
 - c. The Neptun shipyard at Rostock and the Warnow shipyard at Warnemünde each have armed groups of 120 men.
 - d. The various large metallurgical works at Magdeburg so far have only insignificant groups. The older SED members in these plants refuse to let themselves be armed.
 - e. Stahlwerk Henningsdorf. A combat group of 10 men per shift has been formed from the reorganized plant police. Among the 6,000 men employed, the leadership so far has been able to enlist and arm for the combat group only 30 more men, additional to the plant police. In the L.E.W. Works at Henningsdorf there is an armed group of about 100 men.
 - f. The organization of armed combat groups has met with difficulties at the Stahlwerk Unterwellenberg, and in Thale, Finsterwalde and Eberswalde.
 - g. The power plants in the vicinity of Berlin, which should be especially well guarded, have so far been unable to organize armed groups of the desired strength because of unwillingness of employees, including the SED members.

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